

# Book Branch News

NUJ Book Branch

[www.nujbook.org](http://www.nujbook.org)

September 2008

## Diary Dates

### 7 October

Branch meeting  
(These are held at  
Headland House)

### 4 November

Branch meeting

Those on the email  
list will receive  
agendas in advance.

## Book Branch chapels

A & C Black  
BCA (Book Club  
Associates)  
Faber & Faber\*  
HarperCollins (London)  
LexisNexis\*  
Lippincott Williams &  
Wilkins  
Lonely Planet  
Macmillan (Oxford)\*  
Open University  
(Milton Keynes)\*  
Orion\*  
Penguin/DK\*  
Random House\*  
Taylor & Francis Books\*  
Usborne\*

\*Recognized

## Book Branch News

Editorial Team  
Sylvia Courtnage, editor  
Sylvia Kwan, designer  
Mitzi Bales, assistant

## BBN Deadline

Please send chapel  
news and other items for  
the next issue to  
[editor@nujbook.org](mailto:editor@nujbook.org) by  
29September 2008.

## Bookaid International

Helping readers get the books  
they need

Jacqui Scott, Head of  
Communications and Fundraising at  
Bookaid International, introduced her  
talk to the August branch meeting  
with an explanation of its founding in  
1954. It was the personal crusade of  
the wife of the then governor of the  
Bahamas, who, noticing the dearth of  
books available to local schools and  
communities, regularly collected  
books from all her friends and  
contacts whenever visiting the UK.  
She then distributed them on her  
return to the islands.

For about 25 years, the  
organisation continued on a basis of  
individual donations from members of  
the public and the books provided  
were random. Now there is much  
more focus on working in partnership  
with local organisations and providing  
what the prospective readers need.

Formerly there were projects in  
about 40 countries, but this has been  
reduced to focus on about 12 mainly  
sub-Saharan African countries,  
working with any library services they  
have available. Books are largely  
donated by UK publishers and are  
therefore mainly in English, which is a  
major language in the target  
countries. Sometimes Bookaid can  
provide grants to purchase books  
locally in the local languages. This is  
particularly useful for primary  
schools. Skills training is provided to  
facilitate care and use of the books.  
Many different kinds of library, and  
community, reading and literacy  
projects are supported and are highly  
valued by the beneficiaries.

English needs to be sufficiently widely  
spoken as an assurance that the  
books won't simply go to the elite few.

Major donors include the Hachette  
and Reed Elsevier groups, Pearson,  
Bloomsbury, HarperCollins, and  
Usborne. Smaller and radical  
publishers such as Zed Books and  
Amnesty are also keen participants.

Countries selected are towards  
the far end of the Human  
Development Index (on which Japan is  
number 1, Burkina Faso number 176)  
and the recipient countries for Bookaid  
are all above 150 on this Index.

Recipients need to have the  
logistical capacity to distribute the  
books. A project in Zambia was  
recently terminated when it was  
discovered that the books were in a  
warehouse for months with no  
prospect of getting them out to the  
target population. Countries that have  
a book publishing industry of their  
own are excluded.

## How can Book Branch members help?

Workplace champions can promote  
fundraising activities, perhaps setting  
up payroll donations or encouraging  
people to donate through the Bookaid  
website: [www.bookaid.org](http://www.bookaid.org).



*Lady Hermione Ranfurly,  
founder of Bookaid.*

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**NEC Members**

Kyran Connolly (Book)  
Andy Smith (South East)

**Book Branch Website**

www.nujbook.org

**Freelance Rates**

www.nujbook.org/freelance/  
freeln01.shtml

**NUJ Freelance Directory  
and Rate for the Job**

www.londonfreelance.org.uk

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# Book Branch Minutes

(Note: these are abbreviated to save space. It is taken as read that the previous minutes and membership reports are approved each time. The full version is available from the Secretary.)

**1 July 2008**

All matters held over from June meeting ratified.

Turnaround also to share checkpoint table at BTBS Walk.

Negotiations continue at LexisNexis on troublesome restructuring of small department and pay negotiations continue at Penguin DK.

Website to be updated and kept so.

Motion passed: "Book Branch condemns the reported action of Lloyds TSB bank in advising customers with links with Cuba to sever them or move their accounts elsewhere. Book Branch is of the view that this is extraterritorial application of US domestic law. Book Branch agrees to inform the bank of our view and urge them to act in the interests of all their customers by

refusing to be servile to the diktat of Washington DC." Kyran C to draft suitable letter.

Discussion about sudden shutdown of Butler & Tanner.

**4 June 2008**

Although the meeting was inquorate, business was conducted and left to be ratified by the July meeting.

The guest speaker was Chris Frost, chair of the Ethics Committee. (A full report of his talk appeared in the last issue of BBN.)

Plans finalised for participation in the BTBS Walk. Kyran C to attend at the joint checkpoint with Arcadia.

**WRITERS WANTED!**

BBN is your forum for news and views. Let's make it lively! Do you have a gripe? Want to say thanks for help? Have you some thoughts to share on union policy? Please send your contributions or article ideas to me at: sylvia.courtnage@lexisnexis.co.uk

Sylvia Courtnage  
Editor

**AN OPEN MEETING** for all publishing staff, supported by the NUJ and Unite chapels at six leading academic/educational publishing companies  
**GUEST SPEAKER:** Steve Ball, Publishing Field Chair at the Oxford International Centre for Publishing Studies, Oxford Brookes University.  
Contact oxnuj@aol.com / 01865 723 450.

5.30pm, for 7.00–9.00pm  
Wednesday 24 September  
**Oxford Town Hall,**  
St Aldates, Oxford

Is quality being sacrificed in academic and educational publishing – and does anyone care?

## Trade Union Councils: What and why?

At a time when the numbers of Trade Union Councils (local TUCs or Trades Councils) are growing again, you may wonder why the book branch affiliates to several. So this article aims to explain why the branch believes it is important to participate.

First of all, what is a TUC? It is a forum of activists from various unions working together in local communities. Member unions send delegates who either live or work in the locality. The organisation might campaign on issues such as defending public services and council housing and countering attacks from the far right. Most TUCs meet monthly.

In 1982, there were 418 TUCs, but this number shrank drastically during the Thatcher years and they are only now experiencing a renaissance. According to a LRD survey, there are now 142 registered TUCs, up from 137 in the previous year.

The number of different unions within a single TUC varies from 2 to 16, averaging 8 and the number of branches varies from 3 to 50, averaging 14. One third of those surveyed reported that activity is higher than it was five years ago.

Battersea and Wandsworth, where book branch delegate, Annie Pike, is vice-chair, is one of the most active and

successful TUCs. It is unique in funding a paid staff of three and its other activities by running a pub and the Workers Beer Company, which supplies drinks tents at music festivals.

It has tackled issues such as anti-war, anti-racism, repeal of anti-union laws, and support for MP John McDonnell.

Other TUCs have also worked on specific local problems. For example, a new Trades Council was set up in Barnet this year to support the Fremantle carers in old people's homes threatened with inferior contracts and to fight against the closure of local job centres. Merthyr Tydfil TUC campaigns against

open-cast mining and unfair council housing transfers. Chesterfield and District TUC has become more active in campaigns against the Private Finance Initiative and in support of public services.

Despite this picture of healthier TUCs countrywide, there is concern that many rely on a small number of activists to keep things going. New blood is always needed.

Other book branch trades council delegates include Kyran Connolly on Brent TUC and Cath Rasbash, who is the delegate to Waltham Forest TUC.

The branch decides on new affiliations and renews them at the AGM in May. Any member who wants to become a delegate to their local TUC can put forward a motion to join – and is certain to be supported.

### IMPORTANT NOTICE

Monthly Branch Meeting  
Tuesday 7 October 2008, 6.30pm  
Headland House  
308 Gray's Inn Road WC1  
(nearest tube Kings Cross)

Your chance to hear from other chapels, express your views and learn about things of interest to all members.

ALL MEMBERS WELCOME

### EXPENSES FOR ATTENDING BRANCH MEETINGS

Members are entitled to claim reasonable expenses incurred for attending the branch meeting. These include:

- Extra travel costs
- Childcare/babysitting

Please contact the Treasurer at the meeting, if you wish to claim.

## Hotfoot from Tolpuddle

Record crowds turned up in July this year to the Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival in Dorset to see Tony Benn, the Levellers and the Alabama 3. Fans of the two bands mingled with thousands of trade unionists from all over the country.

The event takes place in mid-July each year to commemorate the sacrifice of the famous early trade unionists punished for their actions in trying to organise a union. The TUC website reports: "For this they were sentenced to seven years' transportation to the penal colonies of Australia. The sentences provoked an immense outcry, leading to the first great mass trade union protest.

The campaign won free pardons and the Martyrs' return to England. "

Tim Lezard, former NUJ President and South West TUC Chair, welcomed people to the Festival. He said: "I'm the chair of the South West TUC . . . and this is our party." He urged people to bring back friends next year and make the event even bigger.

Tony Benn received a standing ovation even before speaking. He talked about the environment and said: "Caring for the environment isn't about not flying a helicopter or re-using a plastic bag, it's about shortage. It's about making sure that oil and water are allocated so people don't die of starvation while



*Fiona Swarbrick,  
NUJ Assistant Organiser*

others are living it up and fighting wars."

"My Tolpuddle", a new book of Tolpuddle memories, compiled by Tim Lezard and Nigel Costley was launched at this year's festival. It is a scrap book of thoughts and reflections on the way the Tolpuddle Martyrs have been remembered.

Fiona Swarbrick, NUJ Assistant Organiser, was a contributor to the book. She wrote:

"I can highly recommend the Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival to anyone feeling a bit jaded about their work as a Trade Union rep or official. I first attended the festival in 2002 when I (and most of the members I represented) had just been made redundant. Despite getting great support from friends at the NUJ, part of me was beginning to wonder if my beliefs, in particular the

strength of my beliefs, placed me in some ever-shrinking, anachronistic minority.

"I was amazed by what I experienced at Tolpuddle. Not only was the festival well attended, but by a broad and representative cross section of the movement. The festival is geared towards accommodating children too. Not only does this mean that Trade Unionists with childcare responsibilities are able to attend, but also there is a genuine commitment to educating young people about Trade Unions. It is a very important investment in the future of the movement.

"Trade Unionists are often portrayed as very worthy and serious, but Tolpuddle gives a very different, more accurate, perspective. The importance of the story of the Tolpuddle Martyrs in no way overshadows the fun. I can't think of a nicer way to spend the weekend than in the beautiful, sunny Dorset countryside celebrating my beliefs with likeminded people.

"I now work as a full time official of my union, and attending Tolpuddle has become an annual event for me. It never fails to inspire me."

"My Tolpuddle" can be ordered on-line at [www.tuc.org.uk/tolpuddle](http://www.tuc.org.uk/tolpuddle)